

# Hydrosource helps Fort Huachuca vegetation survive

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In a desert environment, water is liquid gold. Fort Huachuca implements many programs to conserve this valuable resource. The most recent is use of Hydrosource in new landscaping projects.

Hydrosource, a cross-linked polyacrylamide, is a long-lasting, water-absorbing soil amendment that looks similar to salt when dry. When hydrated, the granules look like chunks of gelatin about one-half inch in diameter, according to the Web site [www.jersey-flea-market.com/hydrosource.htm](http://www.jersey-flea-market.com/hydrosource.htm).

One pound of Hydrosource will absorb 20-48 gallons of water, depending on the water's salt content. Mixed with soil before installation of landscaping plants, its use reduces watering frequency, a conservation measure.

Frank Hammond, forester, Environmental and Natural Resources Division, Directorate of Public Works, plans to use the material in landscapes around new housing built here. Currently, there's a 50-percent mortality rate in trees in Fort Huachuca's developed areas due to combination of arid climate and long-term drought. Additionally, many older trees on the installation are not native to Arizona but are species typical of wetter climes. Hammond hopes the combined use of Hydrosource and drought-tolerant vegetation in future landscaping projects will lead to greater plant survivability and enhanced quality of life for post housing residents.

"Some species of trees need lots of water and transpire hundreds of gallons into the air every day. Without sufficient water, these species typically don't do well in an arid environment under drought conditions," Hammond said.

"By planting native vegetation in Hydrosource-treated soil, plants have a better chance to get established and survive."



***Each grain of hydrosource is approximately the size and weight of a grain of sand when dry. Add water, and the grains expand. They can expand as much as 50 times their original size and resemble chunks of gelatin***

